DP/1998/CRP.14
30 November 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND OF THE
UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
Third regular session 1998
14-16 and 21-22 September 1998, New York
Item 14 of the provisional agenda

FIELD VISITS

MISSION REPORT

UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Field Visit to Tunisia and Lebanon

(9-19 March 1998)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report outlines the general findings of a UNDP/UNFPA field visit to Tunisia and Lebanon undertaken by a team of nine members of the 1998 Executive Board. The visit took place from 9-19 March 1998. The team was composed of representatives from the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Canada,[1] Germany, Guinea, Madagascar, Malaysia,[2] Romania, and Ukraine. Germany participated only in the Tunisia segment.[1] [2]

2. The team would like to extend its appreciation to the Tunisian and Lebanese government authorities for their warm hospitality and for the time they took from their busy schedules to exchange views on issues of interest to the team. The team would also like to thank the United Nations Resident Représentatives to Tunisia and Lebanon, Mr. Mohamed Berrezoug and Mr. Ross Mountain, respectively.

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[1] Mr. Rolando Bahamondes, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations, was the rapporteur.

[2] Mr. Shukri Ibrahim, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations, was selected as team coordinator.

Moreover, the excellent team of expatriate and local staff at both country offices merit the team's deep appreciation for the generous sharing of their extensive experience and knowledge.

3. Information and observations made below are based on: the briefs and information provided by the UNDP and UNFPA offices in Tunisia and Lebanon; field visits organized by these offices; meetings held with government officials and with members of civil society.

II. OBSERVATIONS COMMON TO BOTH COUNTRIES

4. Despite the intrinsic political and developmental differences between Tunisia and Lebanon, the team nevertheless observed a number of common approaches to development in both countries.

5. Newly emerging trends in the social area are shaping the Governments' responses to poverty concerns. Political stability is a major priority for government authorities in both countries. Both are trying to expedite the national development process in a manner that is visible and accessible to all of the population. Their national response is characterized by efforts to build the necessary infrastructure for development, and by mounting major national efforts to assist rural remote areas.

6. UNDP and UNFPA have responded effectively to the above-mentioned trends. They have complemented government efforts in a catalytic manner, particularly in trying to ensure the sustainability of social programmes at regional levels.

7. Most importantly, the efforts by UNDP and UNFPA have been made within institutional mandates and priorities as identified in country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) and in country programmes, respectively.

8. In both countries UNDP and UNFPA play important catalytic and advocacy roles, which are facilitated by the standing that these Governments give to the role of United Nations funds and programmes in general and by the roles played by the Resident Coordinators, particularly in Lebanon. It is unfortunate, however, that this major contribution by United Nations funds and programmes has not been brought to the attention of the Executive Board in sufficient detail. While the team recognizes the inherent difficulty of measuring the results of the catalytic and advocacy roles of both UNDP and UNFPA, neither organization has made much progress in developing the monitoring and evaluation tools necessary to measure their contributions to development in the two countries.

9. Efforts at strengthening capacity-building by UNDP and UNFPA were evident in both countries. The involvement of national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in development programmes is being promoted by both programmes, particularly in social sector activities. However, progress is slow, both because of the limited scope of activities in which NGOs can operate, and also due to the limited technical and institutional capacity of most local NGOs in promoting development that goes beyond the traditional approaches. There is considerable scope for the UNDP and UNFPA in Tunisia and Lebanon to further

expand cooperation with the World Bank. This requires, however, better coordination and a more active dialogue.

10. The limited funding provided by UNDP and UNFPA to these two countries has been very well managed to date. Decreased funding is also a potentially serious threat to the excellent access of these two institutions to political decision-making. The positive image build up by United Nations agencies over the years and the quality of the development advice provided by UNDP and UNFPA to these two national Governments continues to secure excellent access by United Nations development agencies, particularly in Lebanon.

11. Both local offices have mounted very successful fund-raising campaigns at the national level to complement limited United Nations resources, particularly in Lebanon. Both Governments voiced strong support for keeping a UNDP and UNFPA presence in their countries despite the limited amount of funding provided. A clear expression of this interest is the substantial cost-sharing resources for United Nations programmes that are being provided by both Governments, which has increased local ownership of United Nations programmes. However, both Governments openly complained about the disruptive effect of programme extensions caused by the limited availability of core funding, as well as about the burden imposed by current United Nations planning and programming processes.

12. Thought must be given by UNDP and UNFPA to finding ways to effectively manage the funding situation in Tunisia and Lebanon; consider as well how the United Nations development system could best respond to the specific development needs of countries at a similar level of development; and simplify the burdensome procedures of the current planning, programming and reporting processes.

13. Finally, staff at both offices made reference to some difficulty in communicating with headquarters; this was particularly the case with UNDP. Delays in response and acknowledgement of information forwarded to headquarters were voiced in both country offices.

III. TUNISIA: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS

14. Political stability and major efforts to integrate Tunisia into the global economy have resulted in a strong commitment of the Government of Tunisia to promote national economic and social development as well as South-South cooperation.

15. At the economic level, Tunisia is putting a major emphasis on enhancing the efficiency and productivity of the private sector. The country has limited natural resources but considerable human resources. It is not surprising, therefore, that a major emphasis is being placed on the development of skills and on upgrading the knowledge base of its human resources. Tunisia is undergoing a second generation of structural reforms under its structural adjustment programme. Despite its immediate socio-economic effects, the Government is strongly committed to reform. Foreign direct investment is scarce and the country relies heavily on tourism to secure the necessary foreign exchange. Efforts to address the scarcity of foreign exchange include a major

government objective of securing a free trade agreement with the European Union as well as obtaining membership in the World Trade Organization.

16. Domestic and regional concerns about political stability have strengthened the Government's resolve and its efforts to further advance social development. A strong sense of national solidarity has been awakened to address poverty and rural development. The current approach is characterized by: (a) efforts to reduce urban and rural income disparities by focusing development efforts in more rural areas ("shadow zones"); (b) recognition of the importance of making social programmes sustainable over time, as well as starting to take action to this effect; (c) allowing for a moderate but increasing role for NGOs in social development; (d) strong support for integrated and preventive health and family planning programmes; (e) noticeable efforts to follow-up to commitments made at global conferences, particularly the International Conference on Population and Development, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit on Social Development; (f) recognition of the value of some national development advances, particularly in the areas of family planning and in the status and participation of women in development, which have resulted in government efforts to take a leading role in Africa to share these experiences with other developing countries, particularly Muslim, French-speaking, African nations; and (g) with regard to the environment, deploying efforts to raise the consciousness and awareness of the population about the fragility of the national environment and the need to protect it.

17. Tunisian government authorities voiced their frustration at the declining level of international support for their development efforts and the diminishing funding role of United Nations funds and programmes. Government authorities felt penalized by the level of success they had achieved in their development efforts. In their opinion, development in Tunisia was accomplished with much sacrifice, particularly the country's commitment to structural adjustment, and although progress had been made, much remains to be done and both the economic and social needs have increased. Their difficulty in attracting foreign direct investment and earning foreign exchange explains to a large extent the Government's interest in establishing a free-trade agreement with the European Union, and to continue to open its economy despite the short- and medium-term economic and social costs.

18. There is a complex but successfully managed equilibrium in the relationship between the Government and UNDP and UNFPA. The Government co-finances a large percentage of the cost of UNDP and UNFPA projects. This funding role of the Government has increased and is a clear indication of the Government "ownership" of United Nations programmes. While this is a positive development, the role of UNDP and UNFPA go well beyond their involvement in specific projects. Their diminishing funding role has limited the capacity of UNDP and UNFPA to carry out a broader policy dialogue with the Government on national development in general, and on their respective areas of development activity specifically. Both institutions have responded by funding "pilot projects" that have as a major objective to prove the validity of certain development approaches to the Government and ultimately strengthen overall national development efforts. This is particularly the case in the social and environmental sectors. What at times may look like programme fragmentation to the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA

may well be the most effective way for United Nations agencies in countries such as Tunisia to ensure development results and impact. The capacity and success demonstrated by UNDP and UNFPA in carrying out these activities effectively and successfully underscore their still privileged position with government authorities.

19. The sectoral areas of focus of the UNDP mandate in Tunisia as described in its first CCF, namely, governance, women, environment and poverty, seem to be particularly relevant in the Tunisian context. Moreover, the focus of UNDP programming: (a) the fight against poverty and the strengthening of social development; (b) the improvement of economic performance and strengthening of management capacities; and (c) the mobilization and development of human resources in the context of a new partnership between the State, the private sector and civil society also seem to respond to the current development needs of the Government of Tunisia.

20. This is also the case with the UNFPA programme, which focuses on reproductive health, population and development strategies, and programme implementation, monitoring and coordination.

21. The UNDP and UNFPA approach appears to work and to produce results. While there are no measurable indicators of success available, the successful catalytic role of UNDP and UNFPA might be illustrated by highlighting efforts such as the introduction of the national environment information system supported by UNDP; the inclusion of facilitators (animatrices), a concept developed by UNFPA, in government-financed family planning programmes in rural areas; and the introduction of NGOs to work side by side with the Government in rural development efforts (the 26/26 Programme).

22. There are some weaknesses in the agency coordination process and in the relationship between the United Nations development system and the donor community. This is particularly the case for UNDP. Although thematic groups have been established, they tend to attract mostly the United Nations organizations institutions, and even then to a limited extent only, rather than other actors in the international development community present in Tunisia. This state of affairs with regard to coordination in the field does not augur well for the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in this particular country.

23. With regard to efforts to house all United Nations agencies in one building (the United Nations House concept) it appears that it will be extremely difficult to make further progress in Tunisia. Most United Nations programmes are already housed in one building provided by the Government to the United Nations. At this time the building does not have capacity to accommodate other United Nations programmes. Some programmes with offices outside the main United Nations building are housed within Tunisian government ministries; others have separate arrangements. Under these circumstances, it might be difficult from a cost and efficiency perspective to put all United Nations agencies under one roof.

IV. LEBANON: SITUATION ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS

24. It is impossible to do justice to the richness of the UNDP and UNFPA programmes in Lebanon in the space allocated in the present report. Consequently, only a fraction, albeit an important one, of the development activities of UNDP and UNFPA and of their contribution to development in that country will be covered.

25. Following a long period of instability and violence that started in 1975 and ended in 1990, Lebanon is reconstructing its political, economic and social structures and institutions. The current development phase demands that special attention be given to the form and content by which development manifests itself in the country. Under the current development phase, development efforts must be forward-looking and be able to lay the economic and social foundation necessary for Lebanon to meet future challenges. UNDP and UNFPA are playing, and should continue to play, a key role in this country.

26. A new Government was elected in 1996. Its development agenda, for the first time, emphasized socio-economic issues, the environment and reform and modernization of the State and public administration. Other important strategic objectives remained, such as: (a) the liberation of southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa from Israeli occupation (as provided for in Security Council resolution 425 of 19 March 1978); (b) the return and reintegration of displaced people; (c) the continuation of the process of reconstruction, with an emphasis on the rehabilitation of infrastructure (largely financed until now by domestic resources); and (d) developing Beirut in particular and the rest of the country into an active centre for local and international investment.

27. Events in 1996 and 1997 affected Lebanon's reconstruction efforts and its economic performance. The impact of the Israeli attacks on southern Lebanon in 1996 were compounded by a deadlocked peace process. Economic growth decelerated. Large public deficits persisted. Governance-related issues became more prominent.

28. The recent slow economic performance has been caused largely by rapidly mounting and unsustainable levels of debt (caused by efforts to reduce budget deficits), an important drop in construction activity (which was the engine of the economy in past years), and slack domestic demand.

29. Reconstruction and development continue to take place within the framework of "Horizon 2000", which covers the period 1996-2007. This programme - through the development of basic infrastructure and public services, establishing the necessary legal and regulatory framework, and a process of public administration reform - aims at providing a strong basis for the private sector to lead the economy and bring the country into the twenty-first century. This approach is expected, in turn, to enable Lebanon to regain its place and role as a centre for regional and international financial and trade activities.

30. The year 1998 witnessed the strict implementation of austerity measures. The Government's interest is now focused on enhancing its fiscal management capacity, strengthening the availability and reliability of national statistics,

reforming its public administration, and creating a modern and more efficient environment for private sector development.

31. The current socio-economic situation is complex. For development purposes, Lebanon is a multicultural society organized mainly on a sectarian basis. This, in turn, requires the maintenance of a carefully established equilibrium in the distribution and implementation of development efforts.

32. Per capita income stood at $3,700 in 1997, making Lebanon clearly a middle-income country. The benefits of development have not been shared evenly. Social tension remains in some regional areas. Absolute poverty is limited and not visible. Relative poverty is widespread. For this reason, the creation of remunerative employment opportunities and improved living conditions in general are issues of increasing concern among public policy makers. Despite its budgetary difficulties, the Government has increased allocations for improved access to, and delivery of, social services, with emphasis on underserved and neglected outlying areas. Much remains, however, to be done to utilize these funds effectively, such as increasing the quality and access to these services by the general population to maximize the impact of the government's social sector investments.

33. It is in the socio-economic context described above that UNDP and UNFPA are participating in the development of Lebanon.

34. UNDP is actively involved in helping the Government of Lebanon to secure resources for the reconstruction phase. The objectives pursued are to: (a) enhance the Government's revenue-generating capacity; (b) develop a reliable programme for consolidated statistics collection; (c) develop an overall strategy for rehabilitating and reforming the public administration; and (d) assist the Government in promoting trade and its integration in the global economy.

35. UNFPA activities in Lebanon currently follow those outlined in the newly developed country programme of assistance approved in 1997. Activities focus on two subprogrammes in the areas of population and development strategies and reproductive health. All of the projects under the country programme will be undertaken in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. UNFPA has developed a subprogramme on population and development strategies that will be implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs aimed at, inter alia, support for the National Population Committee and its Technical Secretariat in identifying and addressing population issues and concerns.

36. Despite a fairly clear conceptual development framework and objectives, development priorities within the national development framework are not easily identifiable.

37. The Government views itself as being in a period of transition from rehabilitation to reconstruction and development. In this transitional phase, some government authorities believe that international donor support, including that of UNDP, should shift from a so-called "soft-development" to more investment in infrastructure-type projects.

38. It is difficult to get a clear idea of government expenditures allocated to basic social services. Reliable data is at most times unavailable, thereby undermining the potential impact of existing social policies. Both the UNDP and UNFPA have undertaken, together with the Government, important surveys to collect reliable data. UNFPA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, completed a study on housing and population that has opened the door for UNDP to map the living conditions in different regions of Lebanon. The results of this latest UNFPA effort will be published very soon and should help the drafting of the Government's social policy. UNDP, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, is also reviewing budget allocations and external assistance for basic social services and studying policy alternatives for the allocation of scarce resources. Both of these studies will be valuable instruments for social policy makers and will facilitate the policy dialogue of both UNDP and UNFPA with government authorities.

39. The Government of Lebanon is making efforts to better integrate social development in its reconstruction programme. The government programme highlights the provision of more efficient and effective health and education services, the promotion of small- and medium-scale enterprises, the role of women, and poverty alleviation. This agenda clearly meets UNDP and UNFPA programme mandates and objectives.

40. The private sector dominates the education and health sectors in Lebanon. Owing to the growing cost of private education, parents are withdrawing their children from private schools and enroling them in public schools because they are unable to pay the private school tuition fees. Some parents have difficulty finding places for their children in public schools because of an upsurge in demand for enrolment. Some are even taking their children out of public schools since they are unable to pay the costs associated with education. The Government has just passed legislation that makes primary education free and compulsory, in large part due to the policy dialogue carried out with the United Nations development system.

41. With regard to health, the Government provides subsidies to private sector hospitals and clinics. Nevertheless, because of the cost of these services, access to health services by the low-income and poorest segments of the population is not systematically ensured.

42. There are social and economic disparities among regions and groups. Many of these differences have structural causes. In this context, UNDP and UNFPA provide significant support to government development projects in the Baalbeck-Hermel area and in areas where people have been displaced, such as Mount Lebanon, where disparities are most noticeable.

43. Regional development is receiving more attention from the Government, but it remains a major development challenge to policy makers, particularly in the occupied territory in southern Lebanon. The reconstruction of repeatedly damaged infrastructure is a drain on scarce government resources. The continued instability negatively affects the image of Lebanon internationally, and further complicates its efforts to attract private sector foreign investment. UNDP is working in this region largely through investing in direct and indirect income-

generating activities, and working with civil society and public agricultural research institutions.

44. Government efforts to develop the Bekaa region are a good illustration of how the Government intends to reduce urban/regional disparities and at the same time meet other strategic national objectives. The primary purpose of the Baalbeck-Hermel integrated rural development project, in which UNDP and UNFPA play technical and partnership roles, is to develop the agriculture potential of this region through water supply, agriculture research and extension, the provision of basic health and education services, including reproductive health, and supporting efforts by civil society to create income-generating activities, particularly for women. Secondary objectives are equally important. They include the establishment of a visible government presence in a remote and strategic region, avoiding further emigration of people from the Bekaa region to Beirut and the return to the cultivation of illicit crops.

45. Overall, the Government's relations with NGOs is still evolving. NGO participation in the implementation of government-financed development projects is increasing. They receive, through the Government, support from the international donor community. However, much untapped potential remains in Lebanon's committed and energetic NGO community.

46. Poverty in Lebanon is not visible and can be characterized largely as relative poverty. This means that a significant segment of the population, because of their low income levels, are unable to gain access to education and health services without government or NGO support. There is also a significant percentage of the population immediately above the poverty line. Poverty alleviation and prevention are, therefore, a major concern of the Government. The Government favours building the infrastructure services necessary to create an economic environment conducive to generating employment, rather than to put too much emphasis in becoming directly involved in social sector activities. Through their participation in integrated rural development activities and their social projects with the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNDP and UNFPA are actively ensuring that the poor benefit from these government initiatives.

47. The role and participation of women in Lebanon's development is increasing. Efforts are being made by the government to support women's participation in the economy through income-generating activities and enhancing the productive capacity of women entrepreneurs. Similarly, efforts to use gender analysis and mainstreaming the role of women in government policies are also developing as a result of the Beijing Platform for Action. Women's access to credit remains difficult. UNDP, UNFPA, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women are integral partners with the Government in these activities, including access to credit.

48. The civil war has had a severe and negative effect on environment throughout the country.

49. The commitment of the Government of Lebanon to follow-up to United Nations international conferences is starting to emerge with regard to Agenda 21, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Children. A committee on conference follow-up has been established by the Prime Minister, chaired by

the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The Government's response to the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements is not evident.

50. UNDP activities on strengthening governance and institution-building are primarily related to fiscal sector and administrative reforms. In Lebanon, UNDP has a clear comparative advantage in these largely economic areas of development. To the Government, UNDP serves as a natural coordinating mechanism. Its capacity to recruit experienced local expertise that the Government views as unbiased is a major UNDP advantage. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have agreed to work with UNDP and bilateral donors in this area. Finally, the privileged position of UNDP vis-à-vis key policy makers makes it easier for UNDP to advocate for the development-specific aspects of Lebanon's fiscal reform agenda, including the reduction of corruption.

51. The United Nations development system is a valued development partner to the Government of Lebanon. Its involvement is comprehensive, from emergency and humanitarian assistance when needed, to supporting and complementing government development efforts to alleviate poverty. The role of UNDP in Lebanon is also constantly evolving as a result of its efforts to respond to shifts in government priorities caused by the transition phase from rehabilitation and reconstruction to development. This role underlines the importance of flexibility in UNDP and UNFPA programming.

52. UNDP, in particular, enjoys a privileged relationship and access to key public policy decision makers. This relationship and access benefits the United Nations development system as a whole.

53. The approach to development used by both UNDP and UNFPA can be characterized as one of policy dialogue, as well as catalytic, particularly in the design and implementation of their development programmes. Capacity-building and national execution are being used by the United Nations development system as effective tools to implement their programmes. Moreover, the scope and flexibility of UNDP activities in Lebanon and its strong coordinating role allow the United Nations development system as a whole to contribute to establishing a sense of normalcy and stability in Lebanon's overall development climate.

54. Both UNDP and UNFPA have been extremely successful at fund-raising to complement their limited financial capacity to contribute to government projects. National Lebanese media initiatives, financed entirely by the private sector, to promote the value of grass-roots development and the importance of the concept of human sustainable development are indeed excellent examples of creative fund-raising aimed at supporting the UNDP policy dialogue role in Lebanon.

55. The capacity of UNDP and UNFPA to identify emerging Lebanese national development priorities in which the United Nations system can play a role is remarkable. With small but innovative project initiatives, they are able to capitalize on government objectives by advocating with policy makers the value of their approach to sustainable human development and reproductive health. The well entrenched credibility of UNDP as a reliable development partner and its

access to key policy makers strengthens its role in policy dialogue. By making these small, innovative project initiatives produce results, both UNDP and UNFPA have succeeded in integrating these initiatives into larger government development plans and, by their presence in these projects, attract the international donor community as partners in subsequent larger and more costly phases. This fact also speaks positively of the Government's openness to both the UNDP and UNFPA advice and commitment to development. The ultimate effect of their advocacy and catalytic roles is a set of more effective and sustainable government programmes, that also advance the sustainable human development and reproductive health agendas.

56. The overall mandates and priorities of UNDP and UNFPA are clearly reflected in their programmes in Lebanon.

57. Coordination, both within the United Nations development system and with the international donor community, is excellent. There are efforts to coordinate and complement work on projects between UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women with other United Nations development funds and programmes and with bilateral and multilateral development agencies. The support and participation of the international donor community, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in UNDP and UNFPA projects attest to the strong coordination role. Thematic groups are in place and functioning well. Regular meetings are held among United Nations agencies and with the international donor community. The role of UNDP as coordinator is recognized and accepted, hence it can take the leadership role and initiative in bringing together a multiplicity of donor agencies and guide overall development assistance to the Government of Lebanon in a more complementary and effective manner.

58. The United Nations House concept has just become a reality in Lebanon. Only very few specialized agencies with long-standing arrangements with the Government will not be housed together. The building facilities provided by the Government are in a prime location in Beirut and have been constructed at government cost. This level of effort attests to the importance that the Government attaches to the United Nations presence in Lebanon in general, and to the contribution of UNDP and UNFPA in particular. The key challenge for the United Nations system will be to maintain these facilities with increasingly diminishing financial resources.

59. The level of excellence and the role of the Resident Coordinator and of the UNDP and UNFPA staff are worth highlighting. The leadership of the Resident Coordinator is exemplary and commendable. The high quality and commitment of both the international and national staff and their capacity to adapt and respond to project oversight demands in regional areas are unquestionable and worthy of recognition.

60. Special mention must be made of the personality and character of the Resident Coordinator. In a situation of a shortage of staff he must stand ready to empower his scarce human resources so that they will be able to realize their full potential. This process is working very well in Lebanon, primarily as a result of a deliberate effort on the part of the Resident Coordinator to continuously renew the technical capacity of his staff.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Tunisia

61. The recommendations of the mission are:

(a) The needs of Tunisia in terms of improving its economic performance, particularly with regard to strengthening its competitiveness, are great and highly specialized. In this context, the comparative advantage of the role that UNDP plays in responding to this national objective should be clarified and clearly linked to the UNDP mandate and priorities;

(b) UNDP has rapid access to "know-how" and this advantage should continue to be capitalized upon;

(c) UNDP and UNFPA continue to have an important role in supporting and promoting the activities of NGOs in the areas of: (i) reproductive health, the advancement of women, particularly in rural areas; (ii) education and training; (iii) income-generating activities; and (iv) the protection of the environment. In this context, they should continue building the capacity of NGOs, while at the same time making available to them proven best practices. UNDP and UNFPA should also ensure that their work with NGOs will be conducive to the sustainability of their projects in the longer term;

(d) Consideration should be given by UNDP and UNFPA to how the transition from core to other types of funding will be made. This does not mean that the United Nations presence should be terminated; it does mean, however, that a different way of funding the United Nations presence in Tunisia should be found. Fund-raising at the country level and flexibility in programming should be an integral part of such transition;

(e) UNDP and UNFPA activities in support of South-South cooperation merit further strengthening;

(f) Whenever UNDP supports the development of traditional women's income-generating activities, care should be given to the sustainability of these efforts by ensuring that as production increases and products reach the market, quality-control and the demand and supply factors of the domestic and foreign markets are taken into account;

(g) Efforts at field-level coordination should be strengthened in Tunisia, as a minimum within the United Nations development system. This will require the cooperation of all United Nations development agencies;

(h) The Resident Representative should renew efforts to get the donor community to work more closely together at least to share their experience in Tunisia's key development sectors and thematic areas;

(i) The role played by UNDP in assisting the Government to complete the national human development report could be used to renew the interest of the donor community in exchanging information with UNDP in areas critical to development, i.e., efforts to open up the economy and social development;

(j) UNDP and UNFPA should encourage the Government to continue its efforts to develop programmes in remote areas;

(k) The regional bureau at headquarters must make a more concrete effort to share lessons learned and success stories with the Executive Board;

(l) The regional bureaux of UNDP and UNFPA must give more attention to the needs of the field in implementing their programmes in Tunisia.

Lebanon

62. Lebanon provides an interesting example of how a country makes the transition from conflict to development and the role played by the United Nations system in such a situation. The recommendations of the mission are:

(a) Given the very limited UNDP and UNFPA financial contribution to Lebanon's development, the catalytic and policy dialogue roles of UNDP and UNFPA must be emphasized as a valid strategic approach in supporting the country's development process. Nevertheless, neither the importance of the United Nations funds and programmes having the necessary funding to support their overall mandates nor the source of such funding must be overlooked;

(b) In a country emerging from conflict such as Lebanon, UNDP and UNFPA must stand ready to be flexible in adapting their mandates to country needs if they are to remain credible;

(c) There is a need to enhance the quality and access of social and economic services to correct regional disparities, protect the environment, and reform and strengthen public administration, especially in rural areas. There is also a need to allow for greater access of women entrepreneurs to credit and, through an accent on the quality of production, to markets to enhance domestic trade and investment for women;

(d) Institutional and capacity-building support should be considered to strengthen national NGOs. In this context, consideration should be given to providing leadership and institution-related training (e.g., in the areas of fund-raising, management, advocacy and administration) to NGO leaders and their immediate colleagues;

(e) When supporting basic income-generating activities, UNDP and UNFPA should make more of an effort to identify non-traditional ways of generating income, particularly for women. Headquarters and regional offices should facilitate the access of country offices to success stories in this area of development;

(f) Basic income-generating activities should also include efforts to enhance the quality of the products being produced and to explore ways to support training in the marketing of these products, both for the beneficiaries and for the partner institutions;

(g) During project and programme design, UNDP and UNFPA should identify more clearly the point at which they should leave their mature and successful projects to the Government and to the international donor community;

(h) The UNDP and UNFPA experience in Lebanon clearly illustrates the fact that programming in middle-income countries should be characterized by: (i) quick turnaround for programme approvals; (ii) flexibility in project identification and implementation; and (iii) a well-defined transition strategy to change the source of funding of United Nations development activities over time;

(i) Training opportunities for local staff and project personnel should be provided to the extent possible. This is particularly the case with regard to mainstreaming gender issues and women into overall development policy and in the implementation of UNDP and UNFPA programmes.